TRACER

McHENRY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

AN ILLINOIS CORPORATION (not for profit)

6422 Main Street, Union, Illinois 60180

Telephone: 815-923-2267

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VOLUME V - No. 3 Newsletter WINTER, 1979

We have decided that for at least this issue, we will again use our new feature, the curator's letter, as our lead-off story; this because he gives us briefly a very good "bird's eye view"--not too long, nor too explicit--of many things that have been going on in your society and at the county museum.

CURATOR'S LETTER

I regret having to report that the January membership meeting which was to be held in Crystal Lake has been postponed until the Spring Thaw. We anxiously look forward to Mr. Kimura's talk on the historic houses of the Crystal Lake area at a time when our teeth won't be chattering too loudly to hear him.

Another activity which we have planned for the Spring is the "Marengo Historical Tour", which will take place Saturday, May 19. We are co-sponsoring this event with the Marengo Fraternal Order of Police and look forward to it becoming an annual event. Five of Marengo's most historic houses will be open to visitors from 10:00 a.m. through 5:00 p.m. The homeowners will be present to answer questions and to tell the history of each of their houses. Tickets for the tour will be $5.00 for adults. $4.00 for Senior Citizens, and $2.50 for children 12 and under. Tickets and luncheon ($1.25) will be available at the Marengo City Hall. We are currently looking for volunteers to serve as hostesses in each of the houses and to help with the luncheon arrangements. If you could volunteer for either of these jobs please call the museum at 923-2267. We will appreciate your help and look forward to hearing from you.

The museum has just received it's 1862 map of McHenry County from the R.R. Donneley Co. of Chicago which did an excellent job restoration. The map is one of a very few known to exist and will be on exhibit to the public when the museum re-opens this spring. The map was restored with funding made available through Federal Revenue Sharing.

Sincerely,
Mark Haggitt

FURTHER COMMENTS

As Mr. Haggitt states in his letter the Crystal Lake membership meeting is being delayed until the weather makes it a feasible project. Watch your local papers for news as to when it will take place. This is a new undertaking, and it is believed that these meetings in various parts of the county will prove very interesting.

The other special items mentioned in the letter, the Marengo Historical Tour and the restoration of the map each deserve their own paragraph.

MARENGO'S HISTORICAL TOUR

In November, Gene O. Westergren came to our Board meeting as a guest and a representative of Marengo's Fraternal Order of Police. That organization was interested in some activity, a community service project of some sort that would also raise some money. In their discussion they had thought of a walk or tour of historical places in Marengo, and Chief Westergren was soliciting the support of the McHenry County Historical Society. Co-president Nancy Fike appointed a committee from volunteers to work with a committee from the Order of Police. Those appointed were Dorothy McEachren, Betty Oberg and Thresile Mulvenna.

From this beginning has come the Marengo Historical Tour, planned for May nineteenth. Mark has told you in his letter of prices and so on. Five houses have been chosen to exhibit this year. They are the Raymond Clemens house on Telegraph street; they use a former crib on the place as a summer house as well as the big house; with the white fence it is a most attractive place, and is remembered as a farm home some sixty years ago. Other homes are the Rev. Kenneth Robinson home, built around the turn of the century; while it was not built as the Presbyterian manse, it was so used for many years; the Lois Piper house with its widow walk on West Grant Street; the Francis Muzzy house on the same street with its cupola that makes it such an outstanding piece of architecture; and Chief Westergren's own home on East Washington, which was the St. John house to begin with but to which the Westergrens have added the former Ernest Robb house. The Robb home was moved from East Washington and the restored and remodeled houses now stand on Forest.

1862 McHENRY COUNTY MAP

The McHenry County map for 1862 has been repaired and renovated by using parts of a second map and returned to the museum. The work was done by the Donnelley bookbinders of Chicago. All who have seen the map are very pleased. The County Historical Society knows of only one other such map, and while it is possible that there are others, there cannot be too many of them. While such rare things must be handled gently, it is expected that this will be on exhibition when the museum reopens in the spring. Mark Haggitt, with the help of a board member (not identified) went and brought it home so it would not have to be crated. Thanks are offered to both gentlemen. The township of Algonquin allocated $1200.00 toward this map repair.

OTHER BOARD ACTIONS

Also at the November meeting, it was voted to install the entire heating system which last year's flood had made necessary. The work on this is almost complete and the board met in comfort for their January meeting held on February fourth after being postponed because of unco-operative weather. The work still remaining is all in Eckert Hall and will be completed shortly.

The case of the Palmer house at Crystal Lake was brought before the county board of your society. Even in the early days of this county the Masonic Order was active in our area and the first meeting of Masons was held in this house. A developer now owns it and has stated that he is willing to sell it or will give it away to an organization willing to move it off the property. it was decided to see if any of the present Masonic organizations could do anything to save it. At the January meeting we learned it has been offered to Crystal Lake.

THANKS TO THE BOY SCOUTS

In November the report was thankfully received that the slab had been poured for the log cabin and was ready to receive it when it can be moved to Union. These boy scouts did the work: David Marshall, Mark Woellert, Mike Eklund, Kevin Bethke, and Todd Brandenberg. Bruce Marshall is their scout master. The McHenry County Historical Society wishes to extend our sincere thanks to them and to Dorothy McEachren who paid for the materials used. In the spring, the plans for placing the cabin on the slab at the museum can be fulfilled.

OTHER NEWS FROM BOARD MEETINGS

At the January meeting, the president of the board, Shuji Kimura, gave an Up-date on the progress of the society's efforts to have the sight of the first silo in the United States declared an historical landmark. In the report, he read a letter from Professor Donell R. Hunt of the Department of Agricultural Engineering at the University of Illinois at Urbana. Professor Hunt said he did not know whether this silo was the first in the United States but that it was a fact that it introduced this method of feed storage to the mid-west in November, 1873. Now-days some forty million tons of silage are fed each year. The site is on the Fred Hatch farm, a farm that is listed in the 1877 directory as belonging to Lewis Hatch, who had come to Burton township in 1837. The 1872 Atlas shows the farm as being much of section twenty-nine and a portion of section thirty-two.

THE TRACER AND ITS ADVERTISERS

We have completed one year of advertising in the Tracer. While we did not carry enough to pay all the printing costs of the newsletter, much less our ever mounting postage bill, the advertising did help. We had planned to have entirely new advertisers for the next four issues so that all the county could be represented. However, some of our advertisers are so pleased with the results of their adverisements that they wish to continue, and at the January society board meeting, it was decided to let these people retain their status as Tracer advertisers. It was also decided that we would undertake to interest enough more businesses to try to pay all the costs of the Tracer. We know that a great many businesses have never been approached to find out if they wished to join our advertising page. May I tell you, here and now, how it works? The only requirement is that it must be a reputable organization, and we do like to have ones that have been established for some time. For instance, Colby's at Crystal Lake state proudly in their advertisement that they are the oldest car dealer in America; the Big Foot General Store dates from 1899; and so on. But we do accept newer businesses because, given time, they will get older. Your editorial board cannot visit all of you, but should you wish to join us, send a letter to The Tracer at the McHenry County Museum in Union, or call Mrs. Danner, 943-4953, and we will arrange for you to be in the Spring issue of this newsletter.

It was decided first to continue with the newspaper publicity through the winter months, but since people read the "Have you Seen" column and other newspaper paragraphs, and wanted to get in to see what was talked about RIGHT NOW, this part of our program has been dropped for the winter months. (The fact that a good share of the time it was extremely difficult to get to the museum when one wanted to select another item to write about, also had something to do with it) But both the column and other news releases will resume in your local papers preparatory to the reopening of the museum.

MUSEUM OPENING AND PROGRAMS

May sixth is tentatively set for the opening date for this summer's season at the McHenry County Historical Museum. Opening day was in April last year and it was a little early, weatherwise. Perhaps, too, the winter has made us all more cautious than usual, and while we are all trying very hard to "think spring" we will have to see very evident assurances of its arrival before we can believe it!

Last summer's programs met with such approval that it is hoped they can be continued, but so far plans are no more definite than that. There are almost three months before opening date, and that is plenty of time for arrangements for very pleasant Sunday afternoons to be made. There have been requests to have some of the programs repeated, and we are sure the program committee will take those wishes under advisement as they plan the summer.

Plans are proceeding for the entertainment at the Annual Meeting in June and there will be more about those plans in the Spring issue of The Tracer and your local newspapers.

INTERESTING ITEMS IN THE ACCESSIONING BOOK

The list of accessioned items has grown to the point where it is not possible to list them, item by item. However, Alice Clark recently pointed out some very interesting things that have been added these winter months. D.K. Adams, for Greenwood Day last fall gave a hand drawn map of the locations of water powered grist and flour mills in Greenwood township from 1843 to 1922. He has donated this to the museum. Would it not be wonderful if we had such a map for each of our townships? George Suchy of Cary has written and presented to the museum two stories, one of his own life and the other the story of the town of Cary. Mrs. Ida Howell of Woodstock has donated sixty-one trading cards from Woodstock merchants and others. These date from the late eighteen hundreds and the early days of this century. These people have our very real thanks, as do all the other donors who gave artifacts in recent months. A special kind of "thank you" must be tendered to Mrs. Harold Vogel of Greenwood. She took pictures of all the people who participated in Greenwood Day and donated copies of them to the McHenry County Historical Museum. Wasn't that a nice thing to do?

REPORTS FROM HEAD DOCENT

Miss Alice Clark, who has done such an outstanding job in "collecting and coordinating" docents since the museum opened has resigned as head docent. She has given us two reports. The first is titled 1978 Report: 57 people served as docents. Honor Roll--those serving ten times or more on days Museum was open:

Alice Bailey	14 hours *
Frances Bailey	14 hours *
Thresile Mulvenna . .	10 hours
Dorothy Northrop. . .	14 hours
Avis Pankonin	10 hours
Herman Pankonin . .	11 hours

Pat Williams . . . . 13 hours
Clara Vogel . . . . 19 hours *

The starred names are those of the people who also lead school groups when the museum was opened just for that purpose.

There are five docents who served only once.

There are seven new docents who volunteered at the end of the season--one even volunteering for Saturday. Good prospects for 1979.

(This is not part of Miss Clark's report, but she has omitted all account of the hours she and her sister, Miss Leta Clark, put in as docents, and they were considerable.)

The second report is labeled Visitation in 1978. There were:

Two YMCA summer camp groups.
Classes from twelve different schools.
Three Girl Scout groups.
One Cub Scout group.
One C. A. R.

Total of seven hundred twelve children during the year.

Two hundred fifty four children during October and November.

Adult Groups...eighty-seven during 1978.
New Frontiers...senior citizens.
Milwaukee group...senior citizens.
McHenry County Conservation Volunteer Leaders.
St. Paul Church Ladies Aid, Harvard
Group of ladies from Richmond area.

Greenwood PTO sent in membership for Greenwood School.

Sixty-two second grade children visited on November twentieth with their principal, Mr. Will Schutte. Mrs. Setzler had made the arrangements. She and Sara Mitchell, Joy Isbister, and Lauri Plummer were the teachers who accompanied the Greenwood children.

On November twenty-first the Union third and forth grades visited, accompanied by Elizabeth Wave, Joanna Lindberg, Mary Manning and Wanda McMurray.

LETTERS

The first letter is from Jane Setzler of the Greenwood school and it will explain the ones that follow. It is addressed to Alice Clark and Ladies: The children learned much from their trip to the Museum. And we all, teachers and children, want to thank you for doing such an excellent job. Here are some letters from the second graders.

All the letters are addressed "Dear Ladies" and all wear the same November date. Since these were second graders, they are printed and only one was not adorned with pictures of the things that had attracted them. (There were a number of pictures of the jail cell!)

The first came from Lori Chada, who said: Thank you very much for showing us the quilts. I liked the purple quilt. And the bell because it had a pretty sound. And I liked the jail because we got to go in it. I liked the building because it was cold. She signed it, Your friend, as did most of the children. Some offered love, and some had their names on the top of the paper and no signature. Sara said: "Thank you for letting us look at the museum. I might do a project for you like the church the boy did. I like the jail and you. "Jenny Tracey's letter says: Thank you for letting our class go to the museum. I like the jail and the other things. The bell was noisy and it hurs (sic) your ears." Jenny Helen "liked spinning wheel. I liked the oven too. I like the museum it makes me think of my great grandma. Thank you for letting us come."

Paul's note was brief and to the point: "Thank you for showing us around that very cold building. I want to say thank you very much." David K was cold, too, but hoped to come back when it was warmer. He liked the horse hair coats. Laura Causling said: "Thank you for showing us some of the thing--that you have at the museum. I like the cowbell. I also like the pladr to but most of all I like the jail best." Shana thanked the ladies for showing "us around your building. I like the platter and the jail." Her drawing showed a turkey running away from a platter! Laura Durnell's letter said: "Thank you for the models you showed us. It was many miles from here. Greenwood school is nice. The ladies are pretty. I have three friends. They are Colleen Lori and shana." Candy's letter was brief: "I liked the big bell and the museum. it was fun I like the jail." Doug Felmetch liked the jail museum and thought it was a nice museum. Vicent thanked the ladies for showing him around and hoped they could fix the heat. He really liked the jail. Mary's letter said: "Thank you for letting us see the things. I liked your things. I wish we can come again. I had a lot of fun. I like the jail." Henry's letter mentions something different: "Thank you for showing us around the museum. I liked the arrowheads and the jail too." And the last letter was from Jeff. His sympathies were aroused. He says: "It is cold in there. How can you stand it? Where do you get all the typewriters?"

It is interesting to see the letters just as the children wrote them, to see what interested them and how they reacted.

PLEAS FOR HELP

The first "plea" is from our President Emeritus. There is an acknowledgement ready to send out for some items donated to the society. They were given by Ella Young Schultz but we do not have her address. The items are: A two piece white wedding dress with lace insertions, which was worn by Carrie Zimmerman at her marriage to Ernest C. Young on the twenty-fourth of July in 1907. According to the biographical file they were Union residents. The second item is the white christening dress with lace yoke and pink ribbon insertion made by Mrs. Myrtle Ellenfeldt Hass of Chicago for the christening of Ellen Young, December thirteenth, 1908. The third is the slip to wear with the christening gown.

If anyone can furnish the address of this lady, it will be most gratefully received.

There is another request for help in the picture section.

AND ANSWERS TO PREVIOUS PLEAS

Last summer, Viola Stock of Woodstock identified the teacher in a school picture that had been in an earlier Tracer. Bessie Ruppert had identified the school as the Alden school, and Mrs. Stock told us the teacher was B. F. Manley, born in Alden township and later an attorney and the postmaster in Harvard. Since that time some of the children have been identified and we were hoping that, in time, we would get most of the names. If we are so fortunate, we will add those names in a later paragraph.

Recently Marguerite Johnston of Harvard saw a Tracer for the first time, and it was last summer's issue, volume V, number 1. As she leafed through it she met a familiar face. In the picture of the three ladies in the left hand corner of the page across from the advertising, she recognized a younger version of her own step-mother, Rowena Ehle Dye. On Mrs. Dye's left is her mother, Georgia Cornue Ehle, and on Mrs. Ehle's left, her mother, Sarah Cornue. The picture was taken at 900 Hart Street, in Harvard, at the house where Mrs. Johnston now lives. She says the picture was taken about 1911.

SOME HARTLAND OBITUARIES FROM DECADES AGO

The most recent of our obituaries is from 1920, and was loaned to Dorothy McEachren after a request in The Tracer last summer for information concerning the route used by settlers coming into the country from the east. It is the property of Dorothy Weers of Woodstock and it tells of the life and death of her grandfather.

MICHAEL SCHAAF

"Michael Schaaf, one of McHenry County's oldest and most respected citizens, passed to the great beyond at his home on Jefferson Street last Saturday at the age of ninety five years. The deceased was born April 7, 1825 in Alsace, France, a son of George and Mary Schaaf. He was reared in his native country and educated in both French and German.

Accompanied by an older brother, George, he came to America in 1845, landing at New York after a journey of thirty-six days. Following the Erie Canal and the Great Lakes they came to Chicago and from thence to McHenry County, finding employment as farm laborers at the then prevailing wage of $6 to $8 per month. In 1847 Mr. Schaaf worked a farm on shares. Two years later the brothers bought a farm which Michael subsequently sold to his brother, but later buying sixty acres for himself. In 1860 he bought the 130 acre farm in Hartland township which for many years he considered as the homestead. He also bought other farm land, acquiring an estate of 295 acres.

In 1859 Mr. Schaaf married Miss Kate Eppel, a sister of Fred Eppel of this city. Four children were born to this union--Charles, Josephine, Minnie and Emma (Mrs. Will Thorne). On the farm in Hartland township Mr. and Mrs. Schaaf reared their children in the beautiful surroundings of highly cultivated fields, fine buildings and a beautiful home life.

Thirty-two years ago Mr. Schaaf moved with his family to Woodstock taking up his residence in this city. On May 20, 1896, the wife and mother died, leaving a vacancy in the family circle which could not be replaced.

In 1898 Mr. Schaaf, having sold the residence on Clay Street, purchased a desirable lot on South Jefferson street where he erected a beautiful home and has spent the last decade of a long and honorable life. Of recent years he has taken no part in the active affairs of the city, but until the very recent years his tall, stately personality with his kindly face and pleasant word of greeting to all was a familiar figure in our city, where he passed in and out among his neighbors and friends an honored and respected citizen.

Mr. Schaaf was a member of St. Mary's Catholic Church, always continuing loyal to the vows of that faith in which he was reared. The funeral services were held Monday morning, the mass being read by Rev. D.J. Conway. The burial was held at Calvary cemetery, in the family lot where lie the remains of his father, mother and brother George."

We sincerely thank Mrs. Weers for the loan of this paper.

The next two obituaries were recently loaned to Mrs. John Maguire of Harvard who shared them with us. The more recent of the two is from the December 17th, 1907 Harvard Herald. Like Mr. Shaaf this lady still has many relatives still living within the boundaries of our county.

MRS. THOMAS O'BRIEN

"Mrs. Mary O'Brien, widow of the late Thomas O'Brien, a pioneer resident of Hartland, died at her home in that town at 3 o'clock Tuesday morning following an illness that had its origin in a severe cold. Mrs. O'Brien had been ill but ten days and at the outset it was not thought her case was serious, but when symptoms of pneumonia developed it was apparent that at her advanced age she could not survive its fatal effects.

The end came peacefully at the farm home where she had happily spent so many years of a useful life, surrounded by those of her own kin. All that the devoted daughter and her husband could do was done, but their efforts were unavailing.

Mrs. O'Brien was a native of County Fermanah, Ireland. She was born there eighty years ago. Her maiden name was Mary McGuire and with her mother and one brother, Edward McGuire, and one sister Margaret, wife of Thomas King of Hartland, she came to America in 1856. For a time the family lived in New York, coming from there and locating in Hartland in 1857, in which year she was united in marriage to Thos. O'Brien, who preceded her to the life beyond on July 12, 1897. Surviving her is the daughter, Mary, wife of Thomas Lordan, one child, a son, Thomas having passed away when seven years old. Two of decedent's brothers, William and Edward McGuire of this city and one sister, Mrs. Thomas King of Hartland also survive her.

Mrs. O'Brien was a kindly, generous hearted Christian lady who was ever ready to aid those in trouble and through a long life in the community where she died had won for herself the good will and esteem of all who knew her.

In her passing Hartland has lost another of its early day residents, one who had lived in the town almost a lifetime and whose death, though living to a good age, will occasion general sorrow, for none knew her but to esteem her.

The funeral services were held this forenoon at St. Joseph's church in this city, Rev. Father Goulet officiating, and he spoke words of comfort to the bereaved and in commendation of the qualities of the decedent, who had been a lifelong member of the Catholic faith."

The last of the three obituaries is the earliest, having been printed in the first week of this century, in the Harvard paper. Grandsons of William Scott still live in Harvard, and there are grandaughters still alive also. The obituary also clears up a point that has often been mentioned but could not be proved at the present time. This was that there should be a stone in the Hartland cemetery for a person who had lived in three centuries, just as there is such a stone in the Big Foot cemetery. This obituary shows that this was true, although the stone is one of the old ones that were broken up and hauled away some years ago.

WILLIAM SCOTT

William Scott, who lived during the last three years of the eighteenth century, all of the nineteenth, and the first two days of the twentieth, is dead at the age of 103 years.

The centenarian passed away yesterday at the residence of his son-in-law, Alexander Cordtz, at 55 Moffat Street. He was born in the City of Cork, Ireland, in the year 1798. The date of the birth is corroborated by intimate friends and relatives. The date or month is not known. He came to America when he was 35 years old and reached the United States by way of Canada. Like his father before him he took to farming. He traveled almost directly to Illinois and made this State his home ever after. When he came here Fort Dearborn was still standing. Hartland, Illinois was then but a wilderness, and it was the ax wielded by young William Scott that felled the first tree in that vicinity. Having been born and reared on a farm, Scott was then a strong, robust young man and it was not long before he had erected a house and created a farm.

It was here on the homestead and farm that Scott planned to live and die. But it was in Chicago that he met Bridget Howard, a young woman from his own country, and the couple were married here. Eleven children were born to them. Mrs. Scott, who was thirty years younger than her husband died thirty years ago. Six children are dead--John, William, Winnie, Mary, John, and Mary--are dead, two of the sons having the same Christian name and also two of the daughters. The following children are still living: Mrs. Jennie Camption, Mrs. Mary Robb, Mrs. Delia Nihan, Michael Scott and Mrs. Emma Cordtz. The latter is 38 years old and is the youngest of the children.

During the early days Scott sent for numerous relatives and a settlement was created at Hartland. The place grew and flourished. The farm was worked for years by the children, but Scott finally sold out the farm, gave up the homestead and spent the last of his years with his children, in Chicago. He loved the country however, and more than once he would return to Hartland where he had served for four years as school director and was constable for five years. Extreme age finally began to tell on him, and for five years he had made his home almost continually with his son-in-law. At the extreme age of 100 years he was hale and hearty, however and moved about without assistance. Two years ago he began to fail.

The funeral will be held on Friday morning."

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This picture is the reason for the second plea mentioned in "Pleas". Mrs. McEachren says: I am trying to catch up on old and odd notes and titbits on my desk and found this envelope with the snapshot in it. No clue as to who brought it, what or whose house or where. Can anyone help us?

SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT THE EARLY DAYS

Do you know the answer? We will publish them in the next Tracer.

A) How much did the county pay for the land for "the poor farm"?
B) How much per diem was the county assessor paid in 1838?
C) How many votes were cast in the county election in 1837?
D) In 1838, the county elected its first representative to the legislature. Who was he?
E) Who was the first sheriff?

When Mrs. Johnstone identified the three ladies in the Volume V, issue 1 picture, she enclosed a view of the house where the snapshot had been taken. This is now Mrs. Johnston's home at 900 Hart Boulevard, Harvard. In 1912, it looked much as it does today even having cement sidewalks, but you will notice that the neighbor, from whose yard the picture was snapped still was bordered by a board walk. In 1912, Rowena Ehle lived there with her mother Georgia Cornue Ehle.

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